

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

April 20, 2004

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman DeVries.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta (late), Osborne, Porter, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Absent: Alderman Sysyn

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Joe Kelly Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I wanted to clarify a couple of things I heard last night at the budget hearing concerning MCTV. First of all, we get a \$1.2 million fee for allowing the cable company to come in and use our wires. The Aldermen and the Mayor don't steal your money, the \$1.2 million, and keep it for themselves. I think there are a lot of people around...I know certain people over at MCTV have been going after the Mayor's budget and trying to get people to come out for additional money for MCTV as if it were cut. The Mayor did not cut the MCTV budget from the last year. He just allocated the money and they are the ones that will decide whether PEG access will be split up so that public access can go off on its own. We are not taking the \$1.2 million...when I was an Alderman as a matter of fact we negotiated a very good contract behind Ted Gatsas and back then we negotiated a contract to get that money into the general fund. By law, PEG access does not have to be funded by the City. It is a choice that a city or town makes and I would just like to see a little bit less rhetoric from some certain individuals at MCTV coming out and blaming the Aldermen and the Mayor for not funding MCTV. MCTV has been funded and it is their decision whether they want to take some of that money and split it up and put public access on its own. I thought that should be clarified. Also, I think Mayor and Aldermen when you are discussing this issue

again they could keep the same place. All they have to do is put a door on the outside and open up on Saturday and there would be enough time for people to be able to come in and use the studio but that is a decision that they can make. They have that choice and I think there is money in there and they can make that determination on their own. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you very much.

Ray Buckley, 24 Gabrielle Street, Manchester stated:

I am State Representative Ray Buckley. I come before you tonight to encourage the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to reconsider your action of last week on the issue of hiring a City lobbyist. I know a thing or two about the functions of the NH State House. Twenty-five years ago I joined the State House staff of then House Democratic Leader, Chris Spirou of Manchester and for years I assisted Chris and other Manchester leaders in legislation regarding Manchester. Eighteen years ago, the people of Ward 8 elected me for the first of eight terms to the Legislature. I am currently the Democratic Whip and in my fifth term as a member of the Democratic leadership. I have sponsored and supported legislation that has brought over \$100 million in State dollars to the City of Manchester during my 18 years. During my term as a legislator I have worked with four Mayors, two Republicans and two Democrats. I also served on this Board for one term. Despite my decades of government experience, I was not asked for my input regarding the hiring of a City lobbyist and neither were my 34 Manchester House colleagues or Senator D'Allesandro or Senator Martel. Only Senator Gatsas, as a member of this Board, had any voice in this process and he voted no. We literally represent over 200 years of State House experience but none of us were allowed to participate. Here are some of my questions. Why are we paying someone \$1,000/month in July and August when no meetings are permitted to occur at the State House? Who does the lobbyist work for – the Mayor, the Aldermen, the School Board or the department heads? What happens when one or more of those entities have a differing position? I can think of many times over the years when that has happened. What is the Manchester lobbyist's relationship with our 38 legislators? Are we supposed to meet with the City lobbyist on a regular basis? Are they supposed to communicate with us in any way? What if a bill is sponsored by one or more Manchester legislators but opposed by someone in City Hall? What if the other clients of the picked lobbyist have a different position than someone at City Hall? I offer the client list of Valerie Acres, Bruce Berkey and Brad Cook. They have 19 other clients. You can all take a look for yourselves. Please also note that these three individuals are listed as the writers of the weekly State House report for the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and their report advocates for specific positions on legislation. Just last week their report went on and on supporting Senate Bill 429, the anti-responsible employer bill. A bill that the Mayor opposed during its legislation hearing and I believe a majority of this Board opposes. I have a copy of that e-mail for you as well since last evening I was told by an individual in this room that I made it all up. Instead of solving a problem, I believe you have created a larger one. Last week in a bi-partisan show of community the members of the Manchester legislative delegation wore mock orange lobbyist badges at the State House. We did that because most of my colleagues were insulted by the

words emanating from City Hall when it was insinuated that the 38 of us were not capable of doing our job. The real problem is communication. Better communication between City Hall and the State House does not need to cost \$15,000 a year. Your Honor, I am not sure why the legislative delegation was not allowed to participate in any of the discussions regarding the City lobbyist. I am not sure why there was such a rush to hire a lobbyist, especially since we are in the final weeks of this session and the new session doesn't begin until January. I encourage this Board to reconsider its actions and table the hiring of a City lobbyist until such time as the problems are worked out and all of the alternatives have been exhausted. Let's work together for the benefit of the people of Manchester.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

I will try to get through this. I am dealing with a cold and I have my vest and Tuesday night yard work colors on. The other day there was an article in the paper about the Mayor's word for the day is veto. Well the word for today is redacted. This is probably what the retracted report that this Board got for \$300,000 in legal fees concerning the baseball park. That article appeared in the paper for months and I asked this Board several times was it true. I never saw a correction in the paper so I have to assume that it is. This is the retracted report that you probably got that didn't tell you a lot of things. What you should have looked out for was that the power plant was not going to be down there. The 264,000 square feet of retail was not going to be down there. The railway easement that only a couple of people knew was being worked on for over a year you didn't know about. Inadequate refrigeration and cooking at Gill Stadium. You put \$4.5 million into it and when the Fisher Cats leave you won't be able to cook a hamburger up there or have refrigeration and no petting zoo down at the new ballpark. That is one thing we were going to get. Well that is probably down on here somewhere and the riverwalk being closed for a year while they do construction. I hope the heck you change that. Things went on week after week and month after month and the changes became ubiquitous. You didn't know what was coming next but Mr. Gatsas asked some tough questions and I give him two thumbs up on that. My Alderman, Mr. Shea over there, asked some questions. The rest of you, I don't know, when it comes to dealing with contractors and New York City lawyers and stuff it seems like you are factless. You don't know how to deal with these people. You need to go out and get the same kind of ammunition that they have but more than likely the biggest senseless thing that happened with this retracted statement here was the quagmire of the land deal. If that thing plays itself out the way they portrayed it in the paper the other day it is going to be July or August before you get settled on how much you are going to get for that land and I bet you are probably going to get not more than \$1.5 million. Mr. Gatsas, I hope you fight for a lot more. Alderman Shea, join him and the rest of you join him.

Jane Beaulieu, 609 South Main Street, Manchester stated:

I am here tonight to give you an update on Hot Couch. There were roughly 12-15 non-profits that gathered yesterday at the Manchester Community Resource Center to discuss Hot Couch. As you know, this teen art drop-in center was developed in 1999 and will close its

door on April 30 this year. Hot Couch has provided a safe, drug-free and alcohol-free environment for Manchester teens to socialize, receive after school mentoring and an outlet to be creative for our teens. Over one dozen non-profit social service representatives, the Mayor's Office and the State Department of Health and Human Services are working together to solve this crisis. A temporary Hot Couch site has been located. A major fundraiser is being organized. The tentative date is Tuesday, May 11 and the temporary staff and volunteers will work together to keep this program alive. We are determined to continue to provide our teens and will be looking for immediate financial support from the community. A teen advisory board will be established to assist us in our goal in keeping permanent sustainability. We are asking for immediate donations, not from City Hall, but within a few weeks we are looking to raise \$30,000. This will bridge the gap and allow grant writers time to solicit funding for the program. Contributions can be mailed to For Manchester and made payable to For Manchester Hot Couch. If you would like to get involved please phone our office. The number is 628-6880. We are very excited to collaborate with some of the dedicated individuals wanting to make a difference for our teens in the Greater Manchester area. We did meet with the Alliance for Community Support and they are working with us to gain information about past sponsors and how the program has been operating for the past five years. We will give you an update and there will be a lot of press about the major fundraiser in the future.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Osborne it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman Roy it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk